

**Edward L. Snyder, MD**  
**Legislative Hearing on the Connecticut**  
**Umbilical Cord Blood Collection Program Act**  
**CT State Legislature**  
**March 1, 2011**

**Testimony Comments**

Thank you Mr. Chairman and committee for this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Connecticut Umbilical Cord Blood Collection Program Act. My name is Edward Snyder, MD and I am past chair of the National Marrow Donor Program and also Professor of Laboratory Medicine at Yale University Medical School. I am also Director of the Blood Bank/Apheresis/Cell Processing/and Tissue Banking programs at Yale-New Haven Hospital. The National Marrow Donor Program operates the national registry of adult donors and cord blood units through the Be The Match Registry that are available to individuals in need of a blood stem cell transplant.

I am here to registry my support for this legislation and the commitment it represents on behalf of the State of Connecticut to further efforts to increase the national inventory of publicly available cord blood units. Cord blood has been found to be a rich source of cells that can benefit those suffering from such diseases as leukemia and lymphoma and for whom a blood cell transplant is an appropriate therapy. In the United States, more than 10,000 individuals each year need a blood cell transplant from an unrelated donor. Unfortunately, only about half of those individuals go to transplant. One of the reasons is that they cannot find an acceptable adult donor on the Be The Match registry.

Cord blood has been shown to be an effective source of cells for those individuals without a matching

adult donor and a preferred source of cells for children suffering from certain genetic diseases, a growing and exciting area of medical research. Publicly available cord blood units listed on the Be The Match registry helped more than a 1,000 individuals last year and the number of cord blood transplants is growing. This has been especially beneficial to ethnic minorities in the United States who have a greater difficulty finding a matching adult donor. In fact, over 35% of the cord blood transplants done in the United States last year were for minority individuals.

The citizens of Connecticut today benefit from the efforts by others across the country that have built the national inventory of cord blood units to its current number of 180,000. But more are needed to assure access to this therapy for all Americans, and this bill represents Connecticut's commitment to participate in building that inventory even as its citizens continue to benefit from the efforts of others.

The bill assures that the funds provided by the state will be well administered by calling upon the advice and guidance of a panel of experts to assist the Department of Health in its allocation of the funds and in monitoring the efforts of the organizations that will contract with the Department of Public Health to collect units in the state. The bill uses a public/private partnership approach that will use the best of both worlds.